VOTING OF DEMANDS FOR GRANTS.

DEMAND III—PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT INCLUDING WATER WORKS AND DRAINAGE—(*contd.*)

PRESIDENT: Order, order. I can give only five minutes to the other speakers on this Demand and then I shall call upon the Chief Engineer. We have got only 20 minutes more for discussion on this Demand.

MR. C. S. LEKSHMANA IYER (*Trivandrum City*): With reference to the several representations made here in regard to the ryots' roads, I have a suggestion to make. The complaint was that there was considerable delay in the taking over of those roads and maintaining them properly. Really there can not be any doubt that this is a grievance for those who have parted with their land and spent money to bring these roads into existence. So far as I was able to ascertain from the representations made here, and as a member of the P. W. D. Advisory Board where we have on more occasions than one discussed, this matter, the difficulty or rather the delay in the taking over of these roads by the Public Works Department arose from two or three factors. One was that the roads were not completed in accordance with the rules. There was yet something to be done. The second factor was that there was some formality remaining to be gone through by the Revenue Department. Naturally, for one reason or another, it so happened that these roads which had almost been completed, were not taken over by the Department, some work of minor importance which remained to be done on these roads completed and the roads properly maintained so that the people of the mofussil parts may rest contented. If in spite of representations year after year, no special agency is constituted to take up this work and see that these roads are taken over by the Department expeditiously and properly maintained, I fear we may have to hear the same tale at the budget session in 1121. The suggestion I have to make is that some officer of the P. W. D. may be specially deputed to take up these roads one by one and make reports as to what remains to be done so far as these roads are concerned, and call up the ryots to do such further work as remains to be done. A Surveyor and a Draftsman may also be deputed to do part of the work which has to be done by the Revenue Department. In cases where some of the ryots are recalcitrant in the matter of giving up their lands, those officers should move for the acquisition of the necessary lands under the urgency clause of the Land Acquisition Act so that those who have parted with the land twelve or fifteen years ago and have done their quota of work to make the road serviceable to the public may not find that the sacrifice that they have made is of no use whatever. My submission, is that the deputing of an officer or two of the Public Works Department and of the Land Revenue Department may not be very costly, but if this work is left to the Chief Engineer and to the Executive Engineers of the several Divisions owing to the fact that large amounts are allotted for special work next year, it may be practically impossible for these

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officers to attend to this part of their work consistently with the execution of other items of work which are equally important if not more important. I would, therefore, suggest that a Special Officer with a staff of surveyors to assist him, may be directed to take up these roads one by one, make reports from time to time and see that the roads are taken over by the Department so that they may be useful to the public.

MR. P. M. VARGHESE: I have already given a cut motion but every one has spoken while I have not..... ...

PRESIDENT: Order, order. Honourable members will realise that after all the Chair has to perform its functions in some kind of manner—though there is no doubt it may be some times haphazard. But I did not notice the honourable member getting up in his seat while very many honourable members got up and were called upon by me. If, however, the honourable member would finish, what he has got to say in two minutes, I shall give him the chance to speak. I do not want any one to think that I have refused permission for some honourable members to speak.

MR. P. M. VARGHESE: സർ, എനിക്ക് ഈ സന്ദർഭത്തിൽ എന്റെ താലൂക്കിനെപ്പറ്റി പ്രത്യേകമായി ഒരു കാര്യം പറയാനുണ്ട്. പൊതുവെ തിരുവിതാംകൂറിലെ റോഡുകൾ എല്ലാം വളരെ ശോചനീയമായ സ്ഥിതിയിലാണ് ഇന്നു കിടക്കുന്നതു്. അതിലും കഷ്ടതരമായ നിലയിലാണ് തൊടുപുഴ താലൂക്കിലുള്ള റോഡുകളുടെ സ്ഥിതി. പ്രധാനപ്പെട്ട ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാർ വളരെ പ്രയാസമായിട്ടേ ആ സ്ഥലങ്ങളിൽ സഞ്ചരിക്കാറുള്ളൂ.

PRESIDENT: I would only request the honourable members to travel outside the State, say in Madras, Mysore, Bombay, Calcutta, etc.. They might then speak slightly differently.

MR. P. M. VARGHESE: I can only refer to the state of affairs here.

PRESIDENT: All that I can say is that eminent persons like the Viceroy of India and the Governor of Madras have remarked that they would like their roads to be at least one-third well laid out as ours are. In these days when there are no possibilities of road-rollers and road materials coming up, I think honourable members will realise the position. I have gone through the whole of India and I am sure that no roads in any other part of India are better than ours. The position is very bad all over India.

MR. P. M. VARGHESE: ആ പറഞ്ഞതു് വാസ്തവമാണ്. തിരുവനന്തപുരം മുതൽ കാൺക്രീറു റോഡും, ട്രാർറോഡും കണ്ടു നേരെ എം. സി റോഡുവഴി അലുവാറോഡിൽക്കൂടി വടക്കോട്ടുപോകുന്ന ഒരാൾക്കു തിരുവിതാംകൂറിലെ സ്ഥിതി ഒന്നാംതരമാണെന്നുള്ള തോന്നൽ ഉണ്ടാകാ

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[Mr. P. M. Varghese.]

തിരിക്കുകയില്ല. സാധാരണ ജനങ്ങൾക്ക് ആവശ്യമായ റോഡുകളെപ്പറ്റി, ഇങ്ങനെ പോകുന്ന ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥൻമാർ അറിയുന്നില്ല. തിരുവനന്തപുരം മുതൽ കന്യാകുമാരിവരെ ഇട്ടിരിക്കുന്ന കാൺക്രീറ്റ് റോഡു കാണുന്നവർക്ക് ഇതു സ്വർഗ്ഗലോകമാണോ എന്നു തോന്നിപ്പോകും. എന്നാൽ ആ റോഡുകളെവിട്ട് മറ്റുള്ള റോഡുകളിലേക്ക് കടക്കുമ്പോഴാണ് എത്ര കഷ്ടതരമായ നിലയിലാണ് തിരുവിതാംകൂറിലെ റോഡുകൾ സ്ഥിതിചെയ്യുന്നതെന്നു അവർക്ക് അനുഭവപ്പെടുന്നതു്. വൈസ്രായി അവർകൾ വന്നപ്പോൾ അദ്ദേഹം ഓടപ്പഴ താഴ്വരയിൽ കൂടി ഒന്നു വന്നിരുന്നുവെങ്കിൽ തിരുവിതാംകൂറിലെ റോഡുകളെപ്പറ്റി അദ്ദേഹത്തിന് ഏതൊരഭിപ്രായം ജനിക്കുമായിരുന്നു. ഈ സന്ദർഭത്തിൽ എനിക്ക് ഇത്രയും മാത്രമാണ് പറയുവാനുള്ളതു്.

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: The one thing that has come out of these discussions is the hardy annual of rural roads and village roads. The Dewan President and myself have frequently mentioned the unsatisfactory state of the organisations that deal with these village roads. We have pleaded that as far as possible the public should co-operate with the P. W. D. in the matter of maintenance of these village and the rural roads.

MR. T. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: May I know from the Chief Engineer in what way the public have been invited to co-operate with the Department.

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: We have mentioned that in the case of village roads and rural roads we shall place the whole of the funds available for these roads at the disposal of any body which is willing to take up the work and do it.

MR. T. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: My question is this. Has this been done previously? What the Chief Engineer says is that it would be done hereafter. Has this been done previously?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: I can only say things which could be done. I am trying to suggest solutions. I am perfectly aware of the conditions prevalent in regard to the maintenance of village roads and have been trying to find solutions for them. These roads are so numerous and so small that it is impossible for anybody to be able to see every one of them. Further, the amount of close supervision that is required over every one of these small works would cost Rs. 20 lakhs and most of it consumed on establishment. I have mentioned it previously, and I repeat again that instead of frittering away the allotment on the maintenance of useless establishment, the gentlemen who are on the spot might take up these works and with the aid of local labour maintain those roads. The necessity for the regular process of bettering the standard of the roads being conceded they could be maintained in a much better condition by the local labour. And for this we shall need the co-operation of the people in this respect.

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MR. VARKALA K. MADHAVAN (*Neyyattinkara* cum *Trivandrum*): May I know from the Chief Engineer whether estimates have been prepared for improving the village roads.

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: Certain funds are allotted for these roads. There is no necessity for a separate estimate.

MR. K. A. MATHEW (*Tiruvalla*): May I know whether any amount estimated last year has been spent for the village roads during this year?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: I am sorry I have no details at present available.

MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI: Does the Chief Engineer expect the public to work within the estimates now provided in the Budget when the Department themselves are unable to get labourers?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: I suggest the honourable member to make an attempt. I am confident that it could be done. I appeal again for the co-operation of the House in that direction so that we can have better village roads and more satisfaction.

MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI: Has the Department thought of the possibility of creating Road Boards statutorily and handing over the money for each taluk and with the power to levy a cess or something like that? If this suggestion is accepted, can public co-operation be forthcoming.

PRESIDENT: How can the Road Board do its work?

MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI: With the representatives who will look after the roads?

PRESIDENT: Will the Road Boards work through the present Public Works Department or will they have their own establishments as Road Boards have in England?

MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI: I want a possible scheme like that to be worked out.

PRESIDENT: These schemes have been thought over. In certain countries Road Boards are in existence and with their own establishment, their own engineering staff and their own labour staff they take the work and certain lump allotments are made. Considering the conditions of the State, the formulation of such a scheme will be practically difficult, because separate Road Boards will find it very difficult to get those establishments. If the honourable member has any scheme in the matter he may put it forward.

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: One item that has been mentioned by one honourable member is about the earth required for village roads and he seems to suggest that the P. W. D. must find it anywhere and anyhow. I appeal to the members to think of the practicability of such a measure. I know of one case where a small bridge approach, a bridge approach hardly one furlong long had consumed the whole of the provision that had been made for the whole of the road some six miles long, for the simple reason that the villagers

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[Dewan Bahadur L. Venkatakrishnan.]

would not give earth and all earth had to be carted from a distance of six miles. If that is the position in respect of most of the village roads the result would be that very few village roads could be constructed, or we must provide six times as much money as we are now providing for their upkeep. The best thing that can be done for the improvement of the village road is to enlist the hearty co operation of the villagers with the P. W. Department and any scheme that is suggested for the improvement of the road in which they have a share in the actual working will certainly be considered and the best result possible secured.

MR. K. A. MATHEW: May I know whether the forty feet tradition is continued now?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: Forty feet has gone long ago, 22 feet of formation width is the current practice. A width of 22 feet is not required to meet the needs of the village roads immediately. But I am hoping for the day when many of the village roads will become motorable. It may not be tomorrow or the year after. But in ten years we might hope to make them motorable. It is against this hope that we are insisting on a width of 22 feet. If you have less than this 22 ft. and if after 10 years you want to broaden it you will have to acquire fresh lands. Acquiring the land at that time would result in enormous expenditure. It is just to prevent that possibility and of the conservation of the allotment that this width of 22 feet is insisted upon now.

One member raised the question whether in the orders for the execution of these works, the question of an advance arises and whether there was any provision for such advance. I would tell the honourable member that there is a provision for such advance and where the indigenous worker cannot carry on the work for a week he will be given such advance as will be required for the week and payments would be made to him every week.

MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI: May I know from the Chief Engineer the receipt sources connected with the maintenance of communications and its percentage to the total expenditure on communications.

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: It is a lump sum that is allotted.....

MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI: The receipts cover 61 percent of the expenditure on communications. That is what we find at page 14 of the report. Receipt from the sources of income connected with the maintenance of communications is 61 per cent. of the expenditure on communications.

PRESIDENT: What does the honourable mtmber suggest?

MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI: In view of the higher rates now prevailing, more money should be allotted for maintenance.

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PRESIDENT: But the honourable member should have made that point in the course of his remarks.

MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI: I wanted to know the percentage of income on the expenditure.

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: If the budget is looked into it would be found that there is a provision of Rs. 14 lakhs odd and also a provision of Rs. 13 lakhs odd for excess expenditure that may be required to be incurred.

One gentleman has been very persistent about a particular road, and I think that I have received a lot of representations about it. I refer to the Karthigapally-Pannipally road. I happened to see it yesterday. I am only sorry that I did not see it earlier. I have seen roads in worse conditions than that road. If I had seen it I would not have started work there. But having committed myself, and the contractor having turned up and the agreement having been handed over to me I have no means of going back. And I request that the House may be pleased to grant the amount.

One member raised the question of a bridge at Vettikkattumukku and another the question of two bridges on the same river on the Vaikom-Thripunithura road. There seems to be a lot of controversy about it. Across one of these rivers there is already a bridge. The construction of another bridge would, prima facie get over the difficulty but I would not commit myself before this House to one or other methods; till after I make a full investigation in the matter.

MR. V. K. VELAPPAN NAIR: May I know from the member whether the proposed site, Vettikattumukku, is an inhabited area?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: I said it was under investigation.

Another member raised the question of a bridge at Chandanathura. I think it was Mr. Morais. I may inform him that this bridge has already been repaired some three weeks ago.

MR. J. T. MORAIS (*Neyyattinkara cum Trivandrum*): The canal I referred to was the A. V. M. Canal.

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: I am sorry I made a mistake. I made an enquiry this morning and they said it was this bridge.

One gentleman raised the question of the Kattapuzha canal. I may inform him that in 1110 it was estimated at Rs. 77,414 in 1117 at Rs. 1,38,735 and in 1118 2,70,000. It has again been revised to Rs. 3 lakhs odd. I inspected the place and I found that immediately after the cutting through watershed was made there would be a drop of 18 feet in the canal and if the canal had been opened, a considerable part of the Pampa river would have turned the whole area into floods and there would have been complete and terrible devastation: Therefore it requires careful investigation. I am sorry therefore it

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would take some little time before it can be executed. Mr. P. S Mahomed raised the other day the question of the rates. He mentioned the fact that he did portion of the Wadai canal at rates prevailing in 1118. He stated in council a couple of days ago that he was actually paying his labour 4 to 10 chs. per day while the rates according to the P. W. Department and agreement with him were 14 chs. per man. That means that he has been under paying. And later on when he was asked to continue and was offered 1120 rates he wanted to be given a large amount of increase, on the basis of his old rates which meant that if he had.....

MR. P. S. MAHOMED: But P. S. Mahomed took that work only in 1118.

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: Yes, that was what I mentioned just now. When the current rate was 14 chs. he was paying only 6 to 10 chs. and so he was making a large profit..... (Interruption) and he wishes to continue getting the same rate of profit. Some doubts have arisen about the statement of the Dewan President regarding the advisory capacity of the P. W. Department in respect of road work. I believe that it relates only to village roads and rural roads and such of the major roads as may be taken up by the local authorities. It is not intended that all public works are to be given away.

PRESIDENT: Order, order. It has come to my notice that certain contractors had already taken advantage of my utterance for the purpose of holding back material in the hope that all the contracts would be handed over to them in the manner indicated by me and that by keeping back the materials for three or six months they can have their own charges. I may inform this House that until these contractors disgorge all the materials in their charge, this Government will not enter into any such arrangement. This Government is aware of the names of those contractors.

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: Again Mr. P. S. Mahomed raws attention to the arrangements in relation to the Authukara Bar. Yesterday while at Mavelikara I was discussing this question and iving my subordinates instructions. In regard to Mr. P. S. Mahoned's question I may say that we are making urgent arrangements.

But a very disquieting fact was brought to my notice at Mavelikara, which I hope is not true. It was that the contractors for the Thaddumathura bridge have been victimised in the past by the levy of a black mail to keep off mischief by some local celebrities and that a breach was made in a completed bund a couple of years ago due to failure to pay the levy. This year we are doing the work departmentally and are taking care that nobody approaches it. I may also state that it would not be pleasant for the person who approaches it. I would request honourable members to exercise their influence to prevent any such victimisation. It is to your own interest, the interest of the State and of everybody else. I have done.

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The question before the House that Government be granted a sum of Rs. 1,46,76,782 under Demand III—Public Works Department including Water Works and Drainage, was put to vote and carried. The motion was passed and the grant was made.

IV—GENERAL ADMINISTRATION EXCLUDING FINANCIAL SECRETARIAT, ACCOUNTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE, LEGISLATIVE BODIES AND LOCAL FUND AUDIT DEPARTMENT.

MR. G. NARAYANAN TAMPI: I move for a grant of Rs. 4,73,516 under Demand No. IV—General Administration excluding Financial Secretariat, Accountant General's Office, Legislative Bodies and Local Fund Audit Department.

PRESIDENT: Mr. T. P. Velayudhan Pillai can move his motions later. Mr. Mahomed

MR. P. S. MAHOMED: സെക്രട്ടറിമാരുടെ ശമ്പളമായ ഒന്നര ര ാ രൂപായിൽ നിന്ന ഒരു രൂപ കറയ്ക്കണമെന്നുള്ള ഉപക്ഷേപം ഞാൻ അവതരിപ്പിച്ചുകൊള്ളുന്നു.

സർ, ഈ ഉപക്ഷേപം ഞാൻ അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്നത് ഒരു സംഗതി ഗവണ്മെൻറിൻെറ ശ്രദ്ധയിൽ കൊണ്ടവരണമെന്നുള്ള ഉദ്ദേശത്തോടുകൂടിയാണ്. മുന്നവർഷത്തിനുമുൻപുണ്ടായിരുന്ന സെക്രട്ടേറിയററിൻെറ ജോലിയുടെ സ്വഭാവവും, ഇന്നത്തെ സെക്രട്ടേറിയററിൻെറ സ്വഭാവവും തമ്മിൽ വളരെ വ്യത്യാസമുണ്ട്. മുമ്പു ഗവണ്മെൻറിൻെറ ദൈനന്ദിനകാര്യങ്ങളിൽ മാത്രം സെക്രട്ടേറിയററ ശ്രദ്ധിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരുന്നാൽ മതിയാകുമായിരുന്നു. എന്നാൽ ഇന്നാകട്ടെ, യുദ്ധപരിതഃസ്ഥിതിനിമിത്തം മറെറപലജോലികൾകൂടി സെക്രട്ടേറിയററ ക്ക് വഹിക്കേണ്ടതായിട്ടുണ്ട്. ആലപ്പുഴ, കോട്ടയം, മുതലായ വാണിജ്യകേന്ദ്രങ്ങളിൽ, കച്ചവടം നടത്തിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന ആളുകളിൽ മിക്കവരേയും, ഇപ്പോൾ തിരുവനന്തപുരം സന്ദർശിക്കുന്ന ഒരാളിന് തിരുവനന്തപുരത്തുവച്ച് കാണുവാൻ കഴിയും. ഇത്ര വളരെ ആളുകൾ തിരുവനന്തപുരത്തു വരുന്നത് അവരുടെ കച്ചവടസംബന്ധമായ സംഗതികൾ, ഒരു വിധത്തിൽ അല്ലെങ്കിൽ മറെറാരുവിധത്തിൽ, സെക്രട്ടേറിയററുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ടുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നതുകൊണ്ടാണ്. ചുരുക്കിപ്പറഞ്ഞാൽ, സെക്രട്ടേറിയററിലെ ഏററവും പ്രധാനപ്പെട്ട ഒരു ജോലി, കൺട്രോൾ സംബന്ധമായും, വാണിജ്യസംബന്ധമായും ഉള്ള നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ നടപ്പിൽ വരുത്തുക എന്നാണ്. എന്നാൽ ഈ സംഗതിയിൽ ഇവിടെ ജോലി ചെയ്യുന്നവർ ശരിയായി ശ്രദ്ധിക്കുന്നില്ലെന്നു പറയേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly